

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3517

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EGEN, PINT, IT

SUBJECT: LABOR UNREST CONTINUES IN PUBLIC SECTOR

REF: A) ROME'S 14338, B) ROME'S 14090

1. SUMMARY. THE FEDERATION CGIL-CISL-UIL (CCU) HAS CALLED OFF A RAILROAD STRIKE IN THE EXPECTATION OF REACHING A SOLUTION IN TALKS WITH THE GOVERNMENT ON OCTOBER 9. THE AUTONOMOUS RAILROAD UNIONS, HOWEVER, WHICH WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE TALKS, HAVE PROCLAIMED RAILROAD STRIKES FOR TEN DAYS BEGINNING OCTOBER 12. THE INDEPENDENT PILOTS UNION ANPAC IS CONTINUING ITS STRIKE ACTIONS WHICH HAVE ALREADY RESULTED IN THE CANCELLATION OF INNUMERABLE ALITALIA FLIGHTS. END SUMMARY

2. AS PREDICTED IN REFTTEL, THE RAILROAD STRIKE CALLED BY THE THREE CONFEDERATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE CCU HAS BEEN CANCELLED IN ANTICIPATION OF TALKS BETWEEN LABOR AND GOVERNMENT ON OCT. 9. HOWEVER, THE AUTONOMOUS UNIONS, JOINED BY THE FAR-LEFT CUB
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AND THE FAR RIGHT CONFEDERATION CISNAL (NONE OF WHICH HAS BEEN

INVITED TO PARTICIPATE ON OCT. 9), PLAN A SERIES OF RAILROAD STRIKES DURING THE PERIOD OCT. 12-22.

3. MEANWHILE, THE AUTONOMOUS PILOTS' UNION ANPAC IS CONTINUING ITS ARTICULATED, UNANNOUNCED STRIKE ACTIONS IN PROTEST AGAINST ATTEMPTS TO COERCE THE PILOTS INTO ONE LARGE AIR TRANSPORT BARGAINING UNIT. TO DATE, SOME 1200 ALITALIA FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED, RESULTING IN GREAT INCONVENIENCE TO ALITALIA PASSENGERS AND IN MAJOR LOSSES TO THE ALREADY BELEAGUERED AIRLINE.

4. THE RAILROAD SITUATION IS A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT ONE. THE CONFEDERATIONS, DETERMINED TO CRUSH THE AUTONOMOUS UNIONS, HAVE INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT IN THE RANGE OF 25-30,000 LIRE (\$35-40) PER MONTH ACROSS THE BOARD. GIUSEPPE MINUTOLI, SEC GEN OF THE INDEPENDENT UNION FISAFS, HAS ALREADY DENOUNCED SUCH A SETTLEMENT AS TOTALLY INADEQUATE: FISAFS DEMANDS A MONTHLY INCREASE OF 100,000 LIRE.

5. COMMENT: IT IS WIDELY CONCEDED THAT RAILROAD WORKERS HAVE A LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCE, THAT THEIR WAGES AND SALARIES ARE TRULY BEHIND OTHER SEGMENTS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR. FOR MINUTOLI, A 25,000 LIRE SETTLEMENT WOULD REPRESENT NO CATCH-UP AT ALL SINCE THE FORTHCOMING SETTLEMENTS IN OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE AREAS (EDUCATION, COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.) ARE LIKELY TO BE OF THE SAME MAGNITUDE. THE GOVERNMENT, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS FACED WITH A MULTIPLE DILEMMA: 1) IT CANNOT AFFORD TO ALIENATE THE MAJOR CONFEDERATIONS, WITH THEIR MORE THAN SEVEN MILLION MEMBERS, AND 2) NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT MAY SYMPATHIZE WITH THE PLIGHT OF THE RAILROAD WORKERS, GIVEN THE NEED TO REIN IN INFLATION, IT CANNOT ACCEDE TO A SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY BE SEIZED UPON AS SETTING A PATTERN FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF THE MANY OTHER CONTRACTS EXPIRING BY YEAR-END.

6. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE INDEPENDENT RAILROAD STRIKES WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. AT PRESENT, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT NO GREAT SUCCESS IS IN STORE SINCE THE CCU, IN ITS DETERMINATION TO SUPPRESS THE AUTONOMOUS UNIONS, SEEMS WILLING TO COOPERATE IN KEEPING THE RAILROADS RUNNING. AS NOTED IN EARLIER MESSAGES, CGIL SEC GEN LAMA HAS ALL BUT GIVEN THE GOVERNMENT A FREE HAND IN CALLING IN THE MILITARY TO RUN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE RAILROADS, IF NECESSARY. VOLPE

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